

it's extraordinary entertainment
with JUGGLER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Michael Menes

expert juggling, eccentric comedy,
and evocative variété



www.michaelmenes.com

extraordinary productions ©

Presenting Michael Menes, Juggler Extraordinaire in “EGADZ!”

Born in Summit, New Jersey on July 4, 1962, Michael Menes was an Independence Day baby. He came on to the scene just as the fireworks were lighting up the sky at 9:05 PM with a head full of bright red hair... a “Yankee-Doodle-Andee”. Until he was 18, he lived in Mendham, a small upper-middle class town in New Jersey about fifty miles outside of New York City. During his youth he made extravagant tree houses, built high-tech box cars, and while attending West Morris Mendham High School, learned to juggle one day in a high school physical-education class. His earliest inspiration was the then struggling (yet amazing) *Flying Karamazov Brothers* who played a small local theater and proved what Michael already knew: that juggling-for-a-living was indeed a real possibility despite the frowns and skepticism of his parents and piers.

Always feeling the desire to be close to nature and travel, Michael headed west to the University of Utah and studied technical theater, drama, dance and liberal arts. Michael saw juggling as a beautiful, expressive, movement art form and he wanted to learn how to theatricalize it. As his commitment grew, he decided he should go back to New York City where he attended New York University. In New York he discovered amazing performers including the creative dance-juggler Michael Moschen who was awarded a McArthur “Genius” Fellowship; physical comedian Fred Garbo, and theater-clown artist Bob Berky. Michael studied with this trio at the Antic Arts Academy in Purchase, New York in 1983. Inspired by this work, he began traveling to more intensive workshops. He went to Maine and studied at the Celebration Barn Theater with master mime and director Tony Montanaro starting in 1984. It was the keen teaching of Tony Montanaro (1927-2002) that really helped Michael blossom into a performing artist. Tony taught Michael mime, improvisation, spontaneity, ensemble skills, and directed his early material for touring.

What followed was work taking him as far away as Singapore, France, Japan, and to venues in the United States as important as The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and the Lincoln Center in New York City. He was awarded two individual fellowship grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and also organized and produced many events in the metro area including the *New Vaudeville Cabaret*. He married a Singaporean girl in 1989 and in 1991, with many friends and colleagues living in Maine, moved up to northern New England and bought and renovated a small home in Buckfield, Maine just over the mountain from Celebration Barn Theater. He toured often with Benny Reehl and *The New England New Vaudeville Revue*.

In 2003, Michael began construction on a large 3500 square foot juggling studio and living space for creating new works, teaching workshops, and creating multi-media projects in North Buckfield, Maine. When not on tour, Michael continues to work in, play in, and develop this secluded retreat facility. Buckfield is also home to the Oddfellow Theater, created by one of Michael’s long-term performing colleagues Michael Miclon. The Oddfellow Theater has received national recognition and presents some of the finest cutting-edge family entertainment in the country in a small unassuming renovated Oddfellows Hall. Also nearby is one of Michael’s former partners, Fritz Grobe the founder of the internet sensation “*Epybird*” who produce viral videos such as the “*Diet Coke and Mentos Experiments*”.

Over the years Michael has appeared at such venues as the Shanghai Performing Arts Center in Shanghai, Your Majesty’s Royal Theater in London, The White Theater in Tokyo, Bally’s Grand Casino and the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City. He’s appeared on television around the world including Cirque du Soleil’s “*Solstrom*” Series, Just for Laughs, “*The International Humor Festival*” on CCTV in Beijing, and The Today Show and Good Morning America in the United States. He’s also worked on over a dozen luxury cruise lines including Celebrity, Crystal, Disney, Royal Caribbean, and Princess Cruise Lines. His production credits include Nissan’s *Tango Buenos Aires* (Japan); Wheelwork Arts (Las Vegas); Dirk Denzer’s *Traumspiede Varieté* (Germany), and Tomfoolery’s *Cirque Voila!* (USA).

For more information, DVDs, or to sign up for eNEWS, visit: www.michaelmenes.com